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WOODED AND WON.

IN SIX CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

LATE one September evening, several years ago, a little crowd had gathered at the railway station of a certain breezy sea-side town in the west of Scotland, in expectation of the arrival of the last train from Glasgow. The stars glittered overhead in a sky of unusual clearness, a sharp east wind blew; and with many a murmured complaint of the coldness of the season, the little company, consisting chiefly of summer visitors, paced to and fro beneath the gleaming lamps, or stood gazing along the line for the first glimpse of the fiery rushing monster they awaited.

'Here she is, here she is!' several voices presently proclaimed, as a red spot of light appeared far off in the darkness, ever drawing nearer and nearer, with a strange triumphant speed. The warning whistle sounded, shrill and long; the bell rang; and in another moment the train had stopped, the passengers stepped out with varied degrees of agility, and all was bustle and confusion.

'This way, this way; God bless us! Archer, here they are!' shouted a stout, red-faced, old gentleman, who had been darting up and down, peering into carriages, in great excitement; and with utter disregard of his neighbours' comfort, he pushed his way to one end of the platform, where the occupants of a first-class carriage were in the act of alighting.

A gentleman, young and handsome, yet very like the eager speaker, was assisting a blooming, fair-haired, young lady to alight. The old man seized the fair traveller by the hand, uttering a word or two of welcome; but ere he had time to speak to her companion (his son, as I may at once state), a girlish voice shouted from the inside of the carriage: 'Uncle Bob, Uncle Bob, here I am home at last;' and a slight, little, brown-haired creature jumped into his arms, with delight sparkling in her brown eyes.

Miss Archer, the first-mentioned young lady, had by this time been found out by her father, a grave

middle-aged man of sober mien; the young gentleman had hurried away to look after the luggage; and the pair were left together for a minute or two.

'Welcome home, my lassie, welcome home, a hundred times! Upon my word of honour, Maud, I've never been right since I let you go,' said the old man heartily; and he ended with a shout of 'Hip, hip, hooray!' much to the confusion of the fair cause of his delight. Laughingly remonstrating, she made her escape to the rest of the party, leaving him to follow them to the station gate, towards which heavily laden porters presently proceeded with the ladies' boxes, many and large, for their owners had just returned from a Parisian school, and were now bringing a supply of Parisian garments to astonish the natives at home.

'Stop a minute, Archer; I want another look at your Miss Katie,' was shouted from behind; and the old man, hurrying up, stopped the fair young lady under a gleaming lamp, and examined her pleasant face with friendly, good-humoured interest.

He saw a probable daughter-in-law in her, to tell the truth, and as good and fair a daughter-in-law as his heart could wish.

'Rosy, and fair, and smiling as ever—just the old bonnie Katie Archer,' he cried; and submitting to a hearty kiss with good-humoured grace, she ran off to her grave father's side.

A very pretty, sweet creature Katie Archer was, and as gentle and lovable as she was pretty: little wonder the old man and his son agreed in wishing to secure such a desirable successor to that post of mistress of their household, which Death had made vacant several years ago.

Maud was an orphan niece of this old man, and lived with him and his son in a large, old-fashioned mansion at one end of the principal street of Green-side. Her uncle and cousin formed the respected firm of 'Rivers and Son,' lawyers and bankers, whose sway had been undisputed since the oldest inhabitant could remember, and who, partly by their own industry, and partly by inheritance, had become tolerably wealthy men.

Mr Archer was a coal-proprietor on a large scale, a man who had got on, and was still getting on

very fast indeed ; so that having now a substantial mansion near the county town, and a tasteful sea-side villa, the charitable world acknowledged him as gentleman, and overlooked little errors of grammar and pronunciation, little roughnesses and vulgarisms that somehow used to be taken notice of when he was a poorer man.

Northburn was the name of his sea-side retreat, and there, six months out of the twelve, he and his comely wife, and healthy, happy troop of young folks, took up their abode.

While I have been thus introducing my characters, the reader will kindly understand that the little party have been exchanging good-byes at the station gate, and have now separated—Mr Archer and his daughter driving off in their handsome carriage-and-pair, which had been awaiting them ; and Maud, her uncle, and Cousin Leigh in a cab, which had been previously engaged for the purpose.

CHAPTER II.

Breakfast was over at Northburn ; the master of the house had just set off on horseback for a distant colliery ; the children had dispersed to school-room and nursery. Mrs Archer was paying her morning visit to the kitchen regions, for she was an active housewife ; and Katie stood alone in one of the bow-windows of the dining-room, watching her father as he rode off down the little avenue that led towards the town.

Never had Northburn looked lovelier : a gentle wind rustled in the trees, and wafted in through the open window the sweet scent of the mignonne still blooming outside ; the cheerful sunshine streamed into the room ; and with a pleased sense of the beauty of all her surroundings, fair-haired Katie turned round from the window with a smile on her youthful face—a smile that deepened as her mother presently entered, and broke into a ringing laugh, pleasant to hear, as, in the happiness of her heart, the girl ran forward, and catching the unsuspecting lady round the waist, made her, *volens volens*, perform a few steps of a merry dance round the table.

'Katie, Katie, are you crazy ? Really, I think there hasn't much good come to you from your finishing school,' remonstrated tall, handsome Mrs Archer, sitting down breathless with her unusual exertions, and looking at the young lady with fond motherly admiration, as, left alone, she executed a graceful impromptu dance, which terminated in a slow and stately courtesy ; after which finale she came up to her mother's chair, and kneeling by it, took her hand, and looked smilingly up into her face. 'Dear mamma, I'm glad to be home again ; I missed all your old faces most dreadfully, away at that horrid school,' she said in earnest tones.

Mrs Archer gave a kindly slap to the girl's plump shoulders. 'And we all missed your young face, lassie, I can tell you,' she said ; then, as if to put an end to sentimentality, which, in truth, the Northburn folks did not take to kindly, she added : 'Really, Katie, that is a lovely morning-dress ; I never was so taken with anything in my life. Upon my word, it is the most becoming thing you ever wore.'

Impressed with a sense of the importance of this suggestive subject, Miss Katie entered into a minute history of the said morning-dress, gravely turned north, south, east, and west, in order to

shew it in every possible light ; and finally the two ladies, seating themselves with their work at one of the windows, engaged in an animated conversation upon dress in general. An hour passed, yet still they had not changed the subject, ever, I must confess, a welcome and interesting one to them. At the end of that time, however, there occurred an interruption.

'Hush, Katie ; there's baby crying,' Mrs Archer exclaimed, interrupting her daughter in the midst of a rapturous account of a beauty of a bonnet seen on the journey home. 'I'll just run to the nursery, and bring her in here ; and we'll let her play on the floor beside us, while we go on with our work. Poor wee body, you know she's not over-strong ; and I'm really uncomfortable when she's out of my sight,' she added apologetically as she left the room.

As each of Mrs Archer's babies, from pretty Katie downwards, had in turn been pronounced by the fond mother far from strong, and yet no more blooming progeny had ever been reared, that lady's home circle was in the habit of attaching no deep importance to the phrase, which, indeed, was but a disguised apology for her unfashionable inability to throw her maternal responsibilities on the shoulders of her experienced nurses ; and therefore, quite undisturbed by this declaration, Katie sang gaily over her work till her mother returned—two-year-old Bessie and a basket of toys in her arms.

The child, a rosy, plump little creature, was established on the carpet beside them, her playthings strewed around her ; and while the two ladies resumed their chat, she amused herself with her last new toy, ere long settling heart and soul to the absorbing work of dissection thereof.

'Well, Katie, and what do you now think of young Mr Rivers ? You've never said a word about him,' Mrs Archer said with a demure air ; and as she spoke, she glanced slyly up from her sewing.

The young lady's answer was not very relevant. 'Do look at Bessie, mamma ! There's no use in the world buying our children toys,' she said, colouring up, and looking strangely conscious ; and then dropping on her knees beside Bessie, she affected to be engrossed with the task of mending a dismembered doll of forlorn aspect.

Mrs Archer smiled, and let her eyes drop on her work again.

'But what do you think of him, Katie ?' she persisted ; and thus pressed, Miss Katie looked up, and spoke with would-be indifference of tone.

'Why, I think he's well enough, mamma ; but why do you ask my opinion of him just at this time ?'

Mrs Archer stopped her work, and laid a kind hand on the girl's shoulder. 'Guess, Katie,' she said playfully ; but Katie refused to venture any surmises, and busied herself more intently than ever with her self-imposed task. 'Well, Katie, I think him a very fine young man, and so does your father ; and there is no man we know we would more willingly give our eldest daughter to,' Mrs Archer presently said.

Katie coloured yet more deeply. 'Stuff and nonsense, mamma ! I wonder how you and papa can be so silly,' she said with a toss of her bright young head ; and a momentary forgetfulness of the fifth commandment, I rather fear, made her quite

unconscious of the reason for handsome Mrs Archer drawing up her figure, and looking very staid and dignified.

'In my young days, fathers and mothers were never spoken of in such pert language,' she said rebukingly.

Miss Katie laughed good-humouredly. 'Oh, but there's been a sad falling-off since then, everybody knows,' she answered lightly; and Mrs Archer, glancing down at her smiling face, smiled in sympathy, despite of her desire to look displeased. Then both ladies worked in silence for a few minutes, and only little Bessie's baby voice broke the stillness of the peaceful, sunny room.

'I know somebody who thinks a deal of Leigh Rivers,' Katie said by-and-by, looking up from her work, and smiling. Reflection had told her that her previous hasty dismissal of the 'young Mr Rivers' subject must have appeared suspicious, to say the least.

'I know a great many people who think a deal of him. But who do you mean, Katie?' her mother asked, returning her smile.

'Maud Leslie, mamma. She never said so to me, you know, but one can't help seeing what goes on before one's eyes; and all the way home she seemed so jealous and cross, and unlike herself,' Katie answered, a pretty, demure half-smile playing about the corners of her lips.

'But why should she be jealous and cross, Katie? Perhaps Leigh Rivers cares as little for you as you do for him, eh, dear?' Mrs Archer questioned, as, keeping her eyes on her work, she carefully folded down a tiny hem.

Katie threw up her pretty head, tapped her foot in a somewhat pettish way, and said, a little crossly: 'Perhaps he does, mamma; but at any-rate his attentions to me have been very marked, and Maud seems to fancy he means something by them. I'm sure he may marry his cousin, or his auntie, or his grandmother, for anything I care.'

Mrs Archer looked in amusement at the girl.

'My dear,' she said, laughing, 'you needn't be violent about such a simple jest. We all know well enough that Leigh and you are very fond of each other. Of course, he is too honourable to make any proposal of marriage to you, in the first place, but he has asked your father's permission to call on him this evening; and we can guess what he wants to see your father for.'

Katie's look softened, but she said not a word, and Mrs Archer went on: 'Indeed, Katie, from what Leigh said to myself a week ago, before he set off to bring you girls home, I don't need to guess his business with your father: I know it.'

Well pleased, yet shyly unwilling to shew her pleasure, Katie drew a long breath of relief, and was silent.

'Is papa to send him away despairing, eh, Katie?' the elder lady asked, as the girl, throwing herself down on the floor beside Bessie, affected to be engrossed with her and her toys.

Recovering her usual self-possession, now all doubt of Leigh Rivers's love was removed, Katie looked up smiling.

'That would be a pity, mamma. You know you have four daughters to marry after you have got rid of me. No, no; the match is quite a good one,' she said coolly, looking every inch her mother's daughter as she spoke; and calm, handsome, sensible Mrs Archer felt an inward pride in

the contemplation of this *sang-froid* on the part of her first-born, though she pretended to reprove it.

'I don't think it at all becoming to hear a young girl talking about good matches, though, of course, old folks must consider everything in a calm prudent way. You may be sure we would never have allowed you to grow intimate with a young man who was not able to maintain you in the style you have been brought up in'—

Katie interrupted her. 'I should never have wished to grow intimate with such a one, mamma. I know the value of wealth as well as most young ladies, I assure you,' she said, with an air of worldly wisdom, that somehow did not altogether please the matron, fain to imagine that only thoughts of love filled the young heart.

After all, the girl's training had been a very worldly one. We must not judge her harshly, if she in after-time fails to act as an unselfish, loving, simple young creature would naturally act. So in quiet talk the early morning hours wore away; a visit to the greenhouse and a long chat with the old gardener forming Miss Katie's next occupation. Then lunch followed; and afterwards the children, released from lessons, scampered about the grounds all the sunny afternoon, while our young lady drove her pretty pony-carriage into town, handling her reins with firm and skilful hand, and returning with rosy cheeks and sparkling blue eyes, in time to welcome her father home to dinner.

Dessert was on the table, and, as usual at that hour, all the family were assembled in the dining-room, when a shout from the little folks proclaimed the appearance of Leigh Rivers. Mr and Mrs Archer looked at each other, and then at pretty Katie, busy popping grapes into baby's mouth, as she sat on her lap, and involuntarily the father and mother sighed.

It would be hard to give her up even to Leigh Rivers, that model of steady clever young men. Only now, when the moment for giving a decided answer had nearly come, did they realise how hard it would be to speak the 'Yes' that duty bade them speak.

Katie glanced from one to the other, and her rosy cheeks paled all at once. When she presently spoke, her voice trembled as they had never heard happy Katie's clear young voice tremble before. 'Papa and mamma,' she said, turning eagerly from one to the other, 'you have always been very, very good to me, and I want to be guided by your wishes in everything I do. Answer him as you think right, and I shall be quite content—mind that.'

They were not a demonstrative family, these sober, sensible, rich folks at Northburn; and Katie's little appeal took them all by surprise, and awakened affectionate emotions they scarce knew how to express. Such of her young brothers and sisters, as had a vague perception of her meaning, ceased their chatter, and looked sorrowfully at her and their parents. Awed by the sudden silence, the little ones stared with round, wide-opened, innocent eyes, and in the momentary hush, Leigh Rivers's footsteps were distinctly heard on the gravelled road outside.

'You are a good girl, my dear,' Mrs Archer said presently, an unusual huskiness in her voice; and grave Mr Archer looked wistfully at Katie, and nodded his head, in token of assent. He would have said something if he could, but somehow his

words choked him; and ere he had cleared his throat, Leigh Rivers's tall, well-built figure stood in the doorway, and, much to everybody's relief, it became necessary to close this trying little scene.

The new-comer was tall and manly looking. He had a pleasant pair of thoughtful dark-blue eyes, and a curly fair beard of moderate dimensions. When he smiled, he looked handsome, everybody declared; and when he frowned, or merely, as was his wont, looked observant and thoughtful, he was just as handsome, many folks thought—poor little brunette Maud among the number. He came forward into the pretty fire-lighted room with a less confident bearing than was his wont; hesitated a little as he made his greetings to pretty Katie and the child on her lap; held her hand in his decidedly longer than there was any need for; and altogether demeaned himself in such a peculiar way, as to warrant any experienced matron like Mrs Archer in her conviction that a formal proposal was on his lips. The wise mother ere long made a summary ejection of the young folks; bade Katie go and look out Mr Rivers's favourite songs; and following her out, shut the dining-room door on the two gentlemen sitting over their wine, in circumstances most favourable to the production of this desired proposal.

Half an hour after, Katie, sitting alone at the piano in the drawing-room, singing softly to herself, turned round, at the sound of the turning of the door-handle, and confronted Leigh Rivers. Blushing, she half rose, then sat down again, and recommenced her playing, though with fingers that lacked her usual steady precision of touch. He shut the door in a quiet careful way, that confirmed her first impression of his determination to speak out at last; then coming up behind her, he stood listening in silence during a long minute, till, unable to go on playing, she brought her variations to an untimely end, and rose from the piano.

'Now or never,' thought the young man; and boldly taking Katie's hand, and detaining it in his, he said, in a voice that betrayed a little tremor: 'Don't go away, Miss Archer. Come to your favourite seat, won't you? I have something to say to you.'

Katie's favourite seat was a low rocking-chair, placed in a window-recess, from which she could in a moment pass out to the lawn, that swept away from the back of the house down to the sea, just then heard gently rippling on the sands. The window was open; and Leigh Rivers, after seating her, silent and blushing, in her familiar nook, closed it, then remained standing by the side of her chair. There was a little silence; then he spoke abruptly, looking down at her, as, gently rocking herself in her chair, she sat gazing out on the shadowy lawn. 'Do you love me ever so little, Katie? If you do, say you will be my wife. Ever since you were a wee thing, I have loved you, and now my life would not seem worth living if you sent me away from you.' He paused, and looked eagerly into her face, half-averted, but covered with tell-tale blushes. Though the lights had not been brought in, he could see her well, for bright firelight filled the room. She did not speak; and he repeated his question in tones that had lost their anxiety, and were merely tender and pleading. 'Will you be my wife, dear? I will care for you, and love you faithfully, God knows,' he said; and

Katie quietly rising, put her pretty hand in his with a quiet dignified grace that charmed him.

'I do love you, Leigh. I have never seen anybody but you for whose sake I could leave papa and mamma and them all,' was her answer; and then Leigh Rivers stooped down and kissed her on the lips in a grave reverent way; and they two sat down side by side, and planned their future, as poor, blind, ignorant mortals will do—a prosperous, sunny, happy future, of course.

He loved her very dearly, in truth as dearly as ever man loved woman, I do believe, and she—well, in her calm rational way, she loved him too; only just then, she did not love him simply for himself alone. She could not have looked up into his kind, manly face, and said honestly: 'Though you had no luxurious home to offer me, no position in the little world we know, no prospect of wealth and worldly aggrandisement for the children God may give us, I would be your wife as gladly as now, when my becoming your wife entails no sacrifice.' And no woman who loves truly, in the highest sense of the word, would not right willingly, if need were, utter such words as those.

FARM-SERVANTS AND THEIR EARNINGS.

It is curious to note the differences in the modes of paying workmen, labourers, and servants for their services. With the exception of the board-wages system, the general rule of domestic servants in England unquestionably is, to receive board and lodging in addition to a certain amount of money-wages, paid quarterly or monthly. It is essentially a domestic system. Artisans and labourers in towns know nothing of this; the employer pays them a certain rate of wages, be it fifteen or fifty shillings a week, and leaves them to manage their board and lodging as they like. Under the old truck-system, the men were often compelled to make their purchases at a shop or store kept (for profit) by the employer; but this is now illegal. Miners are usually paid fortnightly or monthly; their wages are all in cash, as in the case of artisans. But there is a remarkable combination of both systems adopted in agriculture; as if the farm-servant had not yet quite given up the domestic for the manufacturing mode of life.

According to details recently collected by the poor-law authorities, it appears that in Surrey and Kent payment in kind is limited to a certain quantity of beer or cider in haying and harvest; and the same is nearly the case in Sussex and Hants. In Berkshire, carters and shepherds have a gallon of beer per day, house-rent free, and a ton of coals per annum. In Herts, about twenty shillings worth of beer per year is given. In Northamptonshire, the quantity of beer given varies oddly in different parts of the county—'four pints of ale a day during harvest,' 'fifteen shillings during harvest in lieu of ale,' 'a pint of beer a day on thrashing-days.' The words beer and ale are used so indiscriminately that we need not stop to define them; witness 'ale-house' and 'beer-shop' in everyday parlance. Bedfordshire seems to be a thirsty county; for each labourer costs the

employer very nearly, if not quite, two shillings per week for beer the year through: we surmise that it is very small beer, seeing that in harvest-time it amounts to five or six pints per day. In Essex, besides a certain small quantity of beer, some of the labourers are allowed firewood; while those living in 'off-hand' farms also obtain house-rent free. In one district in Suffolk, the labourer receives three bushels of malt during harvest—leaving him, we may suppose, either to sell it or to brew his own beer. Norfolk is very poorly off in these matters; the money-wages are nearly as low as anywhere, and there are very few extras.

In Wilts, the labourer has beer or cider to the value of two shillings a week, with an extra allowance, making it up to two or three quarts a day, when harvesting. In many parts of Dorset, beer is given only at harvest-time; but the labourer has one or more of these privileges—house-rent free, potato-ground free, fuel, malt, wheat always at five shillings a bushel. This makes a little nearer approach to the farm-servant system of the olden times. In Devonshire, cider is the drink instead of beer, two or three pints a day, with a bit of potato-ground, and sometimes fuel; the boys are mostly boarded in the farm-house. In the Tiverton district, the cottage and garden are nearly, if not wholly, rent free; and the men receive the greater portion of their food gratis during haying and harvesting. In Cornwall, one month's food free during harvest. In most districts of Somerset, solid food seems to be given in aid of the money-wages—'dinner on Sundays,' 'bread, meat, cheese, potatoes, and cider;' 'bread, meat, cheese, potatoes, and tea.' These extras must certainly be a welcome addition to the men's ten or twelve shillings a week, and the women's four or five shillings. In Gloucestershire, from Midsummer to Michaelmas, when harvesting and fruiting are going on, the position of the labourer and his family is thus noticed: 'An able-bodied man will frequently earn as much as a pound a week, with an unlimited daily supply of cider, and two or three meals of food weekly. The earnings of women and children are also higher at this season of the year than at any other; a boy or girl, from about eleven to thirteen years of age, will earn about tenpence a day; and from thirteen to sixteen years of age, about sixteenpence. The wife and family of an agricultural labourer, when not otherwise engaged during harvest, will glean corn, which often supplies the whole family with bread for a month; during which time he mostly saves a portion of his earnings, which, added to his extra wages during the harvest, enables him to pay his rent, and provide clothing and shoes for his family; and with the barley and beans obtained by gleaning, he is partially enabled to fatten a pig for family consumption during the year.' Of course, in other parts of the year the good things are not so obtainable.

Passing to the more central counties: in the cider-making shire of Hereford, the labourers are

enabled to slake their thirst gratuitously with something like three quarts of this beverage per day; while other little aids are—flour at sixpence or ninepence under the market-price, a cottage nearly rent free, a rent-free garden that will supply the family with all needful vegetables, milk from the farm-house, ten stones of bacon at Christmas, the wherewithal to keep a pig, or a fat pig at half-price once a year. A good hop-season helps the Herefordshire labourers and their families, as it does those of Kent and Sussex. In Salop, there are a few curious usages. Some farmers give their men a little beer and supper; some will supply cart and horses to bring coals from the pit, if the labourer will buy a ton or two at a time (coals are cheap there); most of the wagoners and cowmen live in the farm-house; almost every labouring family fattens a pig, the hams of which are sent to market; the garden supplies the vegetables, and many of the wives rear poultry; some are well enough off to keep a cow, and have a bit of cowland rent free. The Staffordshire labourers get their two quarts of small-beer per day, with a double allowance during mowing and harvest; but some of the farmers still adopt the old system, supplying the men with daily food and a small rate of money-wages—a bad plan for the wives and children, however, who have to obtain their meals how and where they can. In Worcestershire, all the men have an allowance of beer or cider; and women and children also during haying and harvest; wagoners and shepherds often have a rent-free house and garden. One curious item is: 'When wagoners, shepherds, and cowmen do not keep a pig, their employers usually find one for them, and sell it them at one shilling per score less than the current market-price.' In Warwickshire, the men only get their beer or cider in harvest-time. In what may be called the north midland counties, various usages are found—here a little beer every day; here only during haying and harvest; here four bushels of malt a year. In Derbyshire, the more responsible servants on a dairy-farm are hired by the year. In cheese-making Cheshire, bread and cheese and beer come to the lot of most of the farm-servants, in augmentation of the money-wages; while the children, in the Nantwich district, have all their meals in the farm-house.

Let us next glance at the six counties in the north of England. Lancashire adopts the whole-board or partial-board system very extensively. The local term of 'bagging' implies bread and cheese, or pies; and there are all the varieties of board and lodging, dinner of potatoes and bacon with butter-milk, bagging in the forenoon and afternoon, dinner and lunch, and 'rations allowed for women.' In the Garstang district, 'the farmers generally take their meals with the servants'—perhaps the most primitive of all the old farming usages now kept up. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, scarcely any of these Lancashire customs are maintained; it is only during harvest that 'drinkings' are given, including bread and cheese as well as beer. In the Malton district of the

North Riding, the men, to make amends for lower money-wages, are regaled with beef, mutton, bacon, meat and fruit pies, bread, and cheese—rather a choice variety for Hodge. In Durham county, married labourers are generally hired by the year; they live rent free, and sometimes have eighty stones of potatoes. Hinds are allowed potatoes, and a house worth two shillings per week.* In Northumberland, as well as in Durham, the farm-servants hired by the year are called 'hinds,' a thoroughly old English term, carrying us back to the time when the humbled Saxon was the servant of the haughty Norman. The hind earns about sixteen shillings a week, either all in cash, or made up in part of rent-free house, oats, barley, potatoes, cow's grass, and free cartage for coals. In one of the districts or unions of Cumberland, the labourers receive nine shillings a week and daily board; in the others, fuller money-wages only; and pretty nearly the same difference is observable in Westmoreland.

There are in Wales some instructive instances, shewing that the vicinity of busy manufactures has a tendency to augment the earnings of agricultural labourers. The men find that, if the farmers pay very low wages, they can give them a significant hint, seeing that the owners of mines and forges, smelt-works and foundries, have a good deal of work which unskilled labourers can perform, and for which they are willing to give half-a-crown or so per day wages. In the Gower district, a little beyond Swansea, 'the wages have been advancing from nine shillings a week, which was the rate twenty years ago, to twelve shillings, which is the average rate at present. In some of the more remote parishes, ten shillings are still given; but this rate will not command the labour of the best hands, who can get fourteen or fifteen shillings a week in Swansea or the neighbouring works; those persons who give so low a wage as ten shillings have usually to put up with inferior workmen.' It is chiefly in South Wales that the men have this chance; in the central and northern counties, where manufacturing establishments are few, lower rates of farm-wages prevail. In Caermarthenshire, we are let into a little knowledge of the kinds of food usually given by the farmer in part payment of wages; and it is certain that the Dorsetshire labourer would be glad to obtain so considerable a variety. 'The labourer gets about a shilling a day and his food: for breakfast, broth, potatoes, cheese, salted pork, or "roofed" beef; for dinner, the same, varied with milk, washbrew, tea, or coffee; for supper, same as breakfast.' It does not seem as if matrimonial alliances are much encouraged among the farm-hands in that county; for we find that, 'generally, labourers are hired by the year; they must be single men, and get their board and lodging at the farms. Women also must be single, and are fed as above.' It scarcely needs to be pointed out how objectionable in many ways such a system must be, unless the domestic arrangements of the farmstead are under very thoughtful and kind supervision. We have been told a good deal about the 'gang'-system in agriculture, lately, which is not at all pleasant to hear.

The wheaten loaf, it appears, now supplements the barley-bread and the oat-cake which used to be the staple food of the Welsh labourer. The best farmers are getting into the habit of paying double wages without board and lodging; or a

wage and a half with potato-ground, a load of coal once a year, and corn below the market-price. —How all these things are managed in Scotland, the blue-books do not yet tell us.

HALF AN HOUR WITH A SAMOIEDE FAMILY.

'Ay, that's just the mistake that all you gentle-folks make,' said the mate of the St Petersburg packet, as we leaned over the side to gaze upon the smooth waters of the Baltic, still brightened, even at that late hour, by the perpetual sunlight of the northern summer. My companion was an 'ancient mariner' of the traditional type, a kind of nautical Tom Thurnall, with all the hard-headed common-sense and cool self-reliance of Mr Kingsley's wonderful hero, and with an almost equally eventful biography, of which he had just been giving me a brief outline. He had been becalmed upon half-allowance off Pernambuco, and run out of water in the Bay of Bengal; had been robbed and left for dead in the Australian bush, and all but speared by savages in the forests of Borneo; had eaten rice at Shanghai, caught yellow fever in Trinidad, and served a gun at the bombardment of Sveaborg; and had now settled down into a steady see-saw between London and St Petersburg, usually lasting from May till November.

'That's just where you're wrong,' he repeated, knocking the ashes out of his pipe. 'You think that sailors ought to know everything, 'cause they've been to foreign parts, and cruised, mayhap, all round the world; but there ain't many as does. Once a ship's crew get ashore, they just tumble into the first grog-shop, and that's all they know till their craft weighs anchor again. You ax a sailor where's the *Three Tuns*, or the *Jolly Mariner*, and he'll tell you fast enough; but try him upon the scenery, and the lingo, and the animals, and all that 'ere, and he's mum directly. As for me, I've kept my eyes open a bit, 'cause it comes natural to me to look about.'

'And what's your opinion of all that you've seen?' inquired I, somewhat unreasonably; for it is difficult for any man to sum up his whole experience in one sentence.

The old fellow gave a meaning grin, and replied sententiously: 'Well, my 'pinion is, that *there's many queerer things in the world nor one 'ud think!*'

Many a time since then have I had occasion to recall the various axioms of the old Stoic's quaint philosophy, and none more frequently than the pithy apothegm with which he concluded. My travels in Russia alone—more especially in the central governments—would have fully established the truth of the latter; for of all the 'queer things' upon the earth, there are few more extraordinary than the varieties of mankind in the great semi-Asiatic empire of the East. Among the numerous evidences of Russian power and opulence which adorned the Moscow Exhibition of 1867, was one of a somewhat unusual kind—a large group of life-size figures, representing the various races at present under the rule of the Czar, all arrayed in their national dress, and equipped with their native weapons. A motley band—such as old Herodotus would have loved to look upon when he tasked his imagination to depict the fantastic pageantry of the millions who poured across the

Hellespont at the fiat of his country's greatest enemy. There, from the folds of his weather-worn sheep-skin, peered the low-browed Russian peasant, with every trait of the national character written legibly in his patient, sulky, unyielding countenance. There stood the short squat Finn, planted on his broad feet like a wrestler, with his round puffy face blotched at intervals with thick yellow hair, irresistibly suggestive of an overboiled apple-dumpling. There towered the tall wiry Cossack, with curled moustache and bold upright bearing, a latent vigour betraying itself in every line of his long gaunt limbs. There grinned the gnome-like Bashkir, hirsute and untamable as the fourfooted ancestor assigned him by tradition—a strange contrast to the stately Bokhariote, who stands beside him erect and defiant as in the days when European conquest was but a shadowy possibility. There, too, was the sturdy Esthonian, with his heavy limbs and broad humpish features; and the grimy Tartar, with a face like a penny with a hole through it; and the slim dark-eyed Pole, ever wearing a sharp suspicious look on his expressive countenance; and the thievish Kirghiz, with coarse matted hair and glittering rat-like eyes. And there, conspicuous above all, shone the sleek tiger-like beauty of the Circassian, flaunting in all his barbaric bravery.

But more striking than all were the dwarfish figures from the far North, whose pinched faces seem to bear with them eternally the merciless cold of their grim climate—the Lapp, the Ostiak, the Samoiede; * strange sons of the twilight, outposts of humanity on the shore of everlasting desolation, veteran soldiers in the endless warfare between man's endurance and the destroying might of nature. Interesting, no doubt, to any one who has an eye for the quaintly picturesque; but more interesting still to us, who have seen and spoken with them in the flesh. Shall we admit our readers to the contemplation of a real Samoiede 'interior'?

It is a bright frosty day in the early part of January; and St Petersburg is at its best. The crisp snow squeaks beneath the busy feet that traverse the Nevski Prospect; hurrying sledges flit to and fro across the Nikolaievski Bridge; † crowding figures, like a stream of ants, streak the broad expanse of the frozen Neva with an ever-shifting line of black; the bronze forehead of the Imperial Reformer in the Petrôvski Plain is garlanded with snow; and the mighty front of the Isaac Church, clad in holiday white, masquerades as a palace of marble. The dazzling sunshine, bright as in the best days of summer, the clear pale sky tinted with rosy clouds, the glittering snow, the gilded spires and domes of the great city gleaming in the sunlight, the throngs of sledges whirling over the smooth white surface, and the eddying crowds in their trailing robes of fur, make up a panorama which might satisfy the most critical sight-seer. Now is the period when the capital awakes from its summer lethargy (for St Petersburg in July is almost a counterpart of London in September, or of Chamouni in January); the season of fashion and gaiety, of crammed ball-

rooms and crowded theatres. And so the crowds roll and eddy, and the sledges go whizzing over the crisp snow, and the double-fronted omnibuses rumble along the tram-way, and the sun glints from painted walls and frost-flecked window-panes, and all is life and movement. Far up the great artery of the Nevski Prospect, even to the point where the golden lance of the Admiralty gleams against the sky, we see the unending stream flowing, flowing still. Paris bonnets are jostled by Finnish kerchiefs; gold-laced uniforms rub against tattered sheep-skins; sugar-loaf hoods of the colour of brown paper figure side by side with the glossiest of new 'beavers'; round-faced children, half-buried in huge fur caps and grayish-white over-coats reaching down to the ankle, waddle about like locomotive flour-sacks, devouring with insatiable eyes the marvels of every toy-shop. Clamorous fruit-venders stand sentry at every corner, and the blue-frocked, red-girdled cabmen wear the satisfied look of men who are driving a flourishing trade. For this is the time when the swallows homeward fly—when Monsieur le Beau Monde, having amused himself during the summer by fishing in the Saima Lake, shooting in the forests of Vologda, 'backing the colour' at Homburg, sketching on the Rhine, or lounging about the Boulevards of imperial Paris, returns to his wonted haunts, bringing luxury and custom in his train; his foot is on his native pavement, and his name is 'Tout à la mode.'

Sauntering along the Palace Bridge, our attention is suddenly attracted by a concourse of sheep-skinned spectators on the broad plain of ice below, grouped round a huge, grayish-brown, conical mass, looking very like a gigantic pear set up on end—a likeness only marred by the thin wreath of smoke which curls from its apex.

'What's all this?' ask we of the bearded Ivánoff, who is lounging as usual over his undiminished apples at the corner of the bridge. (Does that man ever sell anything, by-the-bye! and if not, how does he live?)

'It's the Samoiedes,' responds Barbatus: 'they're rather later than usual this year. Strange folk; God sees it; strange folk.—Don't you wish some apples, barin? *—fine apples.'

The old fellow is not so indifferent to a chance of trading, after all; but the Samoiedes are a superior attraction, and we hastily descend the broad granite steps which lead to the river, in order to take a nearer view of the hyperborean dwelling. A strange sight indeed! vividly recalling dear old Hans Andersen's description of the burrows in which the dwarfish North-folk huddled together, while the Snow Queen cast her living flakes abroad. A Samoiede's house is soon finished. Cut a number of poles about twelve feet in length; fix the lower extremities in the ground, so as to form a circle; fasten the upper ends tightly together with strips of bark; then cover the skeleton with reindeer skins, firmly sewed together, leaving a loose fold at the side for the passage of the owner, and a hole at the top for the egress of the smoke—and what more can hyperborean heart desire? No decorations find place in the programme of this simple architect of nature: a thrifty upholsterer he, whose furniture is contained in a very modest compass. No mirrors; no 'proof-before-letters' for him; he

* 'Samoiede' means literally 'self-eater': its applicability we cannot pretend to explain.

† The principal bridge over the Great Neva, named after its builder, the late emperor.

* Answering to our 'sir'; literally, 'master of a household.'

hangs his walls with dried fish, strips of hide, and bark shoes; his Brussels carpets are greasy hides; his chair is the bare earth; his table the lap of his deer-skin wrapper. Wash-hand stand he needs none, for he knows not its use; and few who survey his countenance would compassionate his want of a mirror. He has but one pleasure—that of having plenty to eat; but one pain—that of being frost-bitten. Homely child of nature, grand in thy soapless simplicity, what a study art thou!

We raise the skin which hangs across the entrance, and find ourselves in a space of some eight feet square, stifflingly hot, and impregnated with mingled odours of grease, blood, dried hides, decomposed fish, and unwashed human beings. Articles of 'furniture' hang from the tent-poles, in the last paragraph hang from the tent-poles, or lie scattered about the floor; and in the midst of this chaos are dimly visible two goblin-looking creatures, who, on inquiry, turn out to be mother and daughter—the mamma being about forty, and the young lady twelve or thirteen. The attire of both is extremely simple, consisting of a huge skin rug apiece, which serves for bonnet, cloak, gown, crinoline, 'and all that lacks beside.' Their features are very peculiar. We have seen the sloping crown of the Russian, the broad round visage of the Tartar, the bloated cheeks of the Finn; but here is a type distinct from all—a perfectly *flat* face, not unlike a crushed mask, the nose and cheeks being actually depressed, and the chin and forehead nowhere in particular. Their complexion is a deep greasy brown, tinged with red.

The younger of the twain having picked up a little Russian, we are enabled to converse.

'What work is that you are doing?'

'We are sewing clothes for ourselves, to wear on the way home' (exhibiting a skin cloak very neatly stitched).

'What is this needle made of?'

'Reindeer bone.'

'And the thread?'

'Reindeer sinew.'

'And how do you live in winter? Have you enough to eat?'

'O yes; we have dried fish and reindeer meat; besides, we make cheese out of the deer's milk. Will you taste it?'

From a nook of the skin-tapestry she produces a grayish mass, the odour whereof is as fifty cart-loads of guano bedewed with as many barrels of turpentine; and the scent is enough for us, especially after seeing the titbit handled by those grimy paws. We do as we have been done by, and 'decline with thanks.'

'And where are your reindeer?'

'Outside, behind the tent, with the sledge.'

The temptation of a drive in a reindeer sledge is too strong for us. We sallly forth, and seat ourselves on the conveyance, which is a huge ungainly affair like a meat-tray on the top of a bread-basket, very different indeed from the picturesque little cariole of our childish imaginings. And alas! for 'the antlered monarch of the waste!'—the four reindeer resemble nothing so much as four grayish-white donkeys, with short branching horns and long hair. But we have little time to be critical; for a Russian peasant-woman, who acts as cicerone to our new friends, assumes the place of charioteer, and off we go. The motion is not unpleasant, and

the speed of the animals, when once fairly started, very considerable; but the rocking of the sledge makes us roll about in a rather undignified fashion, and wonder how the rightful owners contrive to balance themselves on that flat slippery surface. We make three or four wide circuits in our new vehicle, to the great delight of the crowd; and then, rewarding our entertainers with a few kopecks,* we depart highly edified.

Truly, as old Shakspeare hath it,

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time!

THE LITERATURE OF MR JUSTICE SHALLOW.

PERHAPS there is no character in Shakspeare with which we feel so intimately familiar as with that of Robert Shallow, Esquire, gentleman born, Justice of the Peace, and Custos Rotulorum. His importance thinly hiding his weakness, his harmless lies concerning the exploits of his youth, his veneration for Sir John Falstaff—who laughs at him, and borrows his money—his fussy hospitality, his family pride, and the 'dozen white laces' on his coat of arms, are described with such minute fidelity, that we feel he is a portrait rather than a study; and the accessories of his picture are as valuable as the central figure itself. All Shakspeare's creations are ideal; but Mr Shallow—in that respect very much resembling 'My Uncle Toby'—is both ideal and representative. He differs from the other characters of Shakspeare, much as Dickens's Pecksniff differs from Molière's Tartuffe. The latter is a type of hypocrisy: Mr Pecksniff is an individual hypocrite, who lived near Salisbury, and wore high shirt-collars. We greatly fear that some living charlatan was an unconscious model for Mr Pecksniff. Whether or not the story of the deer-stealing at Charlecote is true, we are convinced that Mr Robert Shallow was drawn from some country squire of Shakspeare's own time.

Now, the squire of this period was, in some respects, a very exceptional person. The revival of learning in some form or other—were it only in the form of affectation—had penetrated among all classes. During the reigns of Elizabeth and James, the world seemed to have regained the first enthusiasm of schoolboy-hood. We all know that delightful time of life when we read without reflection, and acquired knowledge without discrimination, when we studied biography from Cornelius Nepos and *Robinson Crusoe*, and when we learned concurrently from the pages of Euclid and the ghost-stories of our old nurse the properties of triangles and apparitions. And in the literature of the Tudors it is impossible to avoid remarking a certain frank unreasoning schoolboyishness of feeling. There is a vast amount of knowledge so crude, of pedantry so innocent, and of affectation so unaffectedly genuine, that even in grave and reverend writers we seem to see the promising young

* A kopeck is one-third of a penny; 100 kopecks = 1 rouble.

disciple quoting from his last Latin lesson, making mouths in the glass, and worshipping the talents of Smith Major. Yet no one can study the plays of Shakspeare, of Ben Jonson, or of any other dramatist of that time, without being struck by the fact that pure unmitigated ignorance hardly finds a representative above the class of Jack Cade and Christophero Sly. On the other hand, pedantry and that half-learning which, as Mrs Malaprop says, consists in the 'use of an oracular tongue, and the nice derangement of epitaphs,' are the favourite objects of ridicule. Not to mention such pedants as Holophernes Don Armado or Dr Caius, the very clown in the *Twelfth Night* labours under an oppression of confused learning. 'In sooth,' said Sir Andrew Ague-cheek, 'thou wast in very gracious fooling last night, when thou spokest of Pigrogromitus, of the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus; 'twas very good, i' faith.' Indeed, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, gentlemen vied with their lackeys and ladies with their tire-women in seeking a reputation for a smattering of the new learning. The sailor and adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh discussed the pillars of Seth and the city of Enoch with the gravity of an old college don. Had the *Vicar of Wakefield* been written a hundred and eighty years earlier, Mr Thornhill's discourse would have been stiff with Latin 'tags,' and his love-making to Olivia adorned with quotations from the *Euphues* of Lyly. We have therefore no hesitation in saying that, as far as regards the knowledge of books, Squire Shallow was infinitely superior to Squire Western.

But the poet has not left us without a few hints as to Shallow's attainments. We are told that in his youth he lay at Clement's Inn; and in his riper years, wrote himself 'armigero—in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, armigero.' It is evident that the worthy squire was by no means a mere uneducated clown. Of his cousin Slender's literary tastes, we have still fuller information. 'I had rather,' said Slender, 'than forty shillings I had my book of Songs and Sonnets here.—How now, Simple! You have not the *Book of Riddles* about you, have you?' We have no desire to represent Mr Shallow and his kin as widely or deeply learned. No doubt the sowing of the headlands with red wheat, the baiting of the bear Sackerson, the running of the fallow greyhound on the Cotswold Hills, or a drunken carouse in 'honest, civil, godly company,' occupied most of the justice's time and thoughts. Yet among the calivers, halberts, boar-spears, and dog-couples, there might certainly be found in the parlour-window of the Gloucestershire manor-house more than one dog-eared volume which afforded instruction and merriment to the family circle in the long winter evenings, when the snow was deep on the ground, when the roasted crabs hissed in the bowl, and 'William Cook' served up some 'pretty little tiny kickshaws.' Sir Roger de Coverley's whole library consisted of Baker's *Chronicle*. But we have shewn that Shallow belonged to a more learned age.

Much in that spirit which induces Cockneys to make summer pilgrimages to the pleasant village of Cobham, that they may feast their eyes on the very room in which Mr Pickwick discovered Mr Tupman eating a roast fowl after being jilted by Miss Rachel Wardle, or which brought Charles Lamb to declare that he felt an unappeasable desire to learn what was 'the one good thing' that

Sycorax did, we confess to a morbid curiosity respecting this *Book of Riddles*, whose absence so disturbed Slender. And we flatter ourselves that we have found a book, which, though it can hardly be the very book in question, is most certainly its immediate successor. This book is so characteristic of the credulities, the superstitions, the conceited learning, and the pompously false science which amused or bewildered our ancestors in the age of Shakspeare and Lord Bacon, that we purpose to give briefly some account of its contents.

The title of the book is: *A Helpe to Discourse, or a Misselany of Seriousnesse with Merriment, consisting of Witty, Philosophicall, Grammaticall, and Astronomicall Questions and Answers; as also of Epigrams, Epitaphs, Riddles, and Jests, together with the Countreyman's Counsellour; next his yearly Oracle or Prognostication to consult with, containing divers necessary Rules and Observations of much Use and Consequence being knowne. Now for the sixt time published, and much enlarged by the former authors, W. B. and E. P.* The date of the sixth edition is 1627. As was customary in that age, the *Helpe to Discourse*, though merely a pocket manual, is adorned with no less than six poetical addresses or prefaces. There is the inevitable address to the reader: the author's appeal, in sorrow and vile Latinity, '*ad non emptores istius Libri*'—to those who refuse to buy. Poetical friends lend their aid, and contribute laudatory doggerel, in which the book is compared to a stately edifice, to balm of Gilead, to a complete synod, to Jonah's gourd, and to a treasure of gold. With the passing thought, that the most brilliant achievement of the human intellect could hardly have been heralded with a louder flourish of trumpets, and with the further reflection, that Mr Shallow's intellect must have been prostrated at the outset, we proceed to an examination of the contents.

The *Helpe to Discourse* begins its task very properly by examining Mr Shallow on the subject of divinity. At the same time, we are forced to doubt whether the theological knowledge or imagination of the Shallow family is profitably exercised by a method which reminds us chiefly of those amusements called Sunday Puzzles and Sunday Questions, by which certain religious magazines of the present day endeavour to cheat children into a temporary forgetfulness of their dolls and rocking-horses. And that the questions are profound if not practical, and puzzling if not edifying, may be gathered from the following specimens: 'What number is most vital among men? Why Adam and Methuselah did not live a thousand years? Whether there was any writing before the Flood; and if so, how preserved? Of what wood was the cross made, and whether of divers kinds of wood? What language shall we speak in the world to come?' Many of the questions, indeed, are simply riddles. Thus, Mr Shallow is asked with some quaintness: 'In what place was it that the voice of one creature pierced all the ears in the world?' The answer, of course, is Noah's Ark. Another branch of the divinity to be found in the *Helpe to Discourse* is exactly described by Elia in his letter to an old gentleman whose education had been neglected. 'You will be taught,' said the essayist with exquisite humour, 'to pronounce dogmatically and catechetically who was the richest, who was the strongest, who was the wisest, who was the meekest man that ever lived; to the facilitation

of which solution you will readily conceive a smattering of biography would in no inconsiderable degree conduce.'

In the *Help to Discourse*, we also meet with a kind of elaborate trifling, now happily gone out of fashion, which has evidently descended from monkish times, and is due to the learned leisure of the cloister. That busy idleness, to which we thankfully own our indebtedness, when we admire the fantastic gargoyles, the foliage-wreathed capitals, and the laboriously illuminated manuscripts of the middle ages, becomes offensively silly and puerile, when it applies itself to the production of theological enigmas. One instance may suffice: Mr Shallow is gravely instructed that three things are due to the Deity—namely, 'the half-moon, the sun, and the anger of the dog!' The solution of this somewhat obscure saying is supplied by the Latin word COR, the heart. The first two letters represent by their shape the half-moon and the circle of the sun, and the letter R (*litera canina*) the growl of an angry dog. A monkish influence is also very clearly to be discerned in mystic explanations of ordinary facts of nature. Mr Shallow is asked, for example, why the world is round; and the astounding answer given is, to say the least, calculated to open his eyes and enlarge his intellect. The world is round, 'lest it should fill the heart of man, which is of a triangular shape!' A captious objection, which might occur to a vulgar mind, that this explanation seems to suppose man created first and the world afterwards, is deservedly unnoticed. In the same way, Mr Shallow is instructed that the eye is the sense which was chiefly concerned in the first transgression, and therefore 'sheweth his sorrow by shedding tears, which no other sense can or doth.' Such subtleties as these soar beyond our ordinary notions of cause and effect, and must be classed with the question so earnestly debated between Hudibras and his Squire Ralph, whether or not a synod is a mystical bear-garden.

But perhaps the most noteworthy and amusing part of Mr Shallow's manual is that in which it treats of natural history and philosophy. Here most of Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors* are not only set down as undoubted truths, but supported by an array of learned names which might daunt the most conceited infidel. Thus, Mr Shallow would find that there are four creatures only that live without meat—namely, 'the camelion by the air, the mole by the earth, the sea-herring by the water, and the salamander by the fire.' While we confess that there is something symmetrical in this enumeration of four creatures subsisting on the four elements, we still miss with regret our old friend the bear, who, we used to be taught, lives in winter by sucking his paws. Again, it is interesting to learn that the flint-stone preserves fire within it; that the crystal is congealed by frost; that the hare, 'that fearful and pursued creature,' has the power to change its sex; and that the mandrake presents the form of a man. Mr Shallow would be the less surprised at this last fact, because he might have heard Sir John Falstaff call his page 'thou whoreson mandrake.' There is not wanting a certain poetry in the idea that the mourning of the dove proceeds from her care for her offspring; or that swallows lie dormant in the winter, and awake in the spring, in order to afford an emblem of the resurrection.

The answer to the question, whether the bat is a bird or a beast, is charming. 'The bat possesseth such an evenness betwixt both, that she cannot justly be said to be absolutely either the one or the other; for she hath wings, but no feathers; she flies but in the evening; she hath teeth, which no bird hath; and she nourisheth her young with milke, which no bird doth: yet, because she hath wings and flies, wee reckon her among the number of birds.' Now, there is a passage in the *Complete Angler* which is a curious parallel of this. The other huntsman is asked by Piscator whether he hunts a beast or a fish. 'Sir,' says he, 'it is not in my power to resolve you; I leave it to be resolved by the College of Carthusians, who have made vows never to eat flesh. But I have heard the question hath been debated among many great clerks, and they seem to differ about it; yet most say that her tail is fish; and if her body be fish too, then I may say that a fish will walk upon land.'

The other huntsman in his humorous answer unconsciously illustrated a tendency of his age. In the present day, we only read the old writers on natural history (if we read them at all) to laugh at their blunders, or to wonder at their superstitions. With our ancestors, the case was far different. In their schoolboyish hurry of reading and trustful reverence for their masters, there was no room for experiment, proof, or comparison. In their unreasoning readiness to accept all that is written, it seemed to be taken for granted that no man is able to observe, investigate, or judge for himself. Men had indeed begun to think for themselves in matters of religion; but, amazed at their own temerity, they hesitated, with the inherent conservation of human nature, to do for science what had been done for theology. It is always the case that, when one old abuse is cleared away, remaining old abuses are the more fondly cherished; and to the downfall of the papacy and the dogma of transubstantiation we may ascribe the protracted reign of basilisks, phoenixes, and unicorns. Lord Bacon, the profoundest intellect of his age, refused to credit the discoveries of Galileo. Sir Matthew Hale hesitated and faltered when trying a number of poor women on charges of witchcraft, which would now be scarcely believed in the remotest corners of Devonshire or Cumberland. The author of the *Religio Medici* promulgated as many *Vulgar Errors* as he refuted; and by exposing big lies gained a credit for truthful investigation, which enabled him to replace them with bigger.

The very love of learning which distinguished the reigns of Elizabeth and James, rather increased than diminished the number of popular superstitions. The old absurdities were still believed, and numberless new ones introduced. Such was the greediness, with which the stores of learning were devoured, that no manner of discrimination was used; students never imagined the possibility of sifting fact from fiction, more especially if the fiction was in the Latin tongue, and indorsed by a name respectable among scholars. No man with eyes in his head, and the inclination to use them, could have believed the ridiculous fables that Mr Shallow was taught to regard as undoubted truths. But our ancestors preferred to close their eyes. To the name of Albertus Magnus was a sufficient credential; it was impious to doubt the truth of Leonardus Lessius; and he who cited Pliny to

prove that the heart of a black he-ass, eaten with bread, was good against the falling sickness, pleased himself and convinced his audience. Izaak Walton must have taken more than one pike with a well-developed roe, and he must have observed the glutinous bunches of frog-spawn clinging to the sides of the ditches by the river Lea; yet he gravely informs us that, 'unless the learned Gesner is mistaken,' pike are produced from the pickerel weed, and frogs are generated of mud and slime. Most middle-aged men will remember that, when railroads were first laid down, terrified cattle fled with uplifted tails, and broke through fences, in their anxiety to escape from the fiery monster that steamed and snorted across the fields. But now, when the express whirls by, the lambs hardly whisk their tails, and the rabbits scorn the shelter of their burrows. Mankind is never so fearful as when preparing to become fearless.

The authors of the *Help to Discourse* take great advantage of this weakness of Mr Shallow and his contemporaries. Thus, Mr Shallow is informed that the question, whether a man has not a rib less than his wife, 'hath bred some controversy among the learned.' The simple expedient of counting the ribs of the human skeleton does not seem to have occurred to any of the disputants. Again, if Mr Shallow wishes to know how many teeth he has in his head, he is referred to a line of some monkish poet. We should have thought the looking-glass or the nearest barber-dentist a more reliable authority. For facts of natural history, Pliny, who is called 'a most certain author,' is chiefly studied. Three years before the death of Queen Elizabeth, he had been translated into delightfully quaint English, by Dr Philemon Hodman, and all classes eagerly swallowed his nonsense. His works are now unread; but M. Cuvier sums up his merits as follows: 'Un auteur sans critique, qui, après avoir passé beaucoup de temps à faire des extraits, les a rangés dans certains chapitres, en y joignant des réflexions qui ne se rapportent pas à la science proprement dite; mais qui offrent alternativement les croyances les plus superstitieuses unies aux déclamations d'une philosophie chagrine.' We have quoted this criticism of M. Cuvier because it is applicable to most of the writers on natural history of the middle ages, who, to do them justice, displayed unrivalled knowledge of everything except the habits of the animals they wrote about. Again, while we are quite ready to accept St Chrysostom as a very pious and eloquent Father, we can hardly believe, even on his word, that goat's blood is the only thing that will melt adamant. When we are told that a certain countess of Holland, as a punishment for her rudeness to a beggar, gave birth to three hundred and sixty-five children at one time, it is eminently satisfactory to have the respectable names of Guicciardini, L. Vives, and Erasmus as vouchers for the fact. But this habit of referring everything to authority becomes positively ludicrous, when, in answer to the question which is the longest day, we are told: 'St Barnaby saith that which hath the shortest night.' We feel much obliged to St Barnaby; but we fancy that Mr Shallow might have solved the problem so far himself. 'Divers philosophers,' said Sir Hugh Evans, 'have taught that the lips are parcel of the mouth.' We ask again, could not the worthy knight have found that out by his own unaided powers?

We have selected the following extracts from the *Help to Discourse*, partly as being illustrative of the preceding remarks, and partly on account of their great quaintness of thought and expression. 'Q. How far is the east from the west?—A. A day's journey, for the sun passeth between them every day.

'Q. What may the world most fitly be compared unto?—A. A deceitful nut, which, if it be opened with the knife of truth, nothing is found within it but vacuity and vanity.

'Q. What things do the eyes most betray that a man would keep secret?—A. Love and drunkenness.

'Q. What passions and diseases are those that cannot be hid?—A. Love and the chincough [hooping-cough].

'Q. What are the benefits of good scents to the body?—A. To purify the brain, refine the wit, and awake the fancy.

'Q. Whence proceed tears?—A. Out of the brain's most thin and moist excrement, of which it yields great plenty.

'Q. What creature of all others sheds tears at its death?—A. The hart, that fearful and dry creature, that brays after the water-brooks.

'Q. What are the outward figures of the body to judge of the inward disposition of the mind?—A. A head sharp and high crowned imports an ill-effected mind; greatness of stature, dulness of wit; little eyes, a large conscience; a great head and goggle eyes, a stark staring fool; great ears, to be akin to Midas' ass; spacious breasted, long life; plain brows without furrows, to be liberal; a beautiful face to note the best complexion; the soft flesh, to be most wise and apt to conceive. Albertus saith these are the signs of a wit as dull as a pig of lead—to wit, thick nails, harsh hair, and a hard skin, the last whereof was verified in Polidorus, a fool, whom Elianus makes mention to have had such a hard thick skin that it could not be pierced with bodkins.'

In this desert of vague hypothesis and conjecture it is refreshing to come at last to a veritable scientific experiment, and we only hope that 'Polidorus, a fool,' liked the process.

The *Help to Discourse* is not complimentary to women. Mr Shallow is told that there are more women in the world than men, 'because, in the whole course of nature, the worst things are ever the most plentiful;' that there are two things that cannot be too much trimmed—namely, a ship and a woman; that they 'are so able of tongue that three of their clappers will make a reasonable noise for a market;' and that 'to answer merrily, and not altogether impertinently,' 'tis said that the last part of a man that stirs is his heart, but of a woman her tongue.' We suspect that Mrs Shallow's 'clapper,' made a 'reasonable noise' when these insults to her sex were read out. In an age when Puritanism was fast gathering head, it may be supposed that the pope of Rome does not escape without abuse. Accordingly, we find that he is 'the dog that, with shut eyes, barks against all truth;' and he is comprehensively summed up as 'so opposite, that commonly, whatever he praises is worthy of dispraise, for whatsoever he thinks is vain, whatsoever he speaks is false, whatsoever he dislikes is good, whatsoever he approves is evil, and whatsoever he extols infamous.'

In a 'Discourse of Wonders Domestical and Foreign,' we are bound to say that the list of wonders appears to be entirely original, and is charmingly varied. 'Q. Which are the strangest accidents in all the Chronicles?—A. 1. The removings of the earth. 2. The raining of blood. 3. The multitude of mice in the Isle of Sheppey, that could not be driven away nor the place cleansed, till a flight of owls came and devoured them. 4. The chain of twenty-four links, with lock and key, that a flea drew, being about her neck. 5. The man that slept in the Tower three days and three nights, and could not be wakened during that space by any noise or violence, by pricking him with needles or otherwise.'

This transition from earthquakes to performing fleas is worthy of a place in Pope's treatise on Bathos; but we half suspect that the authors of the *Help to Discourse* were laughing at Mr Shallow; and we feel convinced that when they penned the grandiloquent answer to the following question they were inwardly laughing very heartily indeed. 'Q. May it be that without wood an ox boil itself?—A. By preconjecture to forerun this discovery might lead a man into some conceited admiration; therefore to stop that labour of the brain, the Scythians teach us the secret of their necessity: for, living in a country where grows no wood, they kill an ox, and then take out all the bones from the flesh, and of the bones make a fire that roasts or boils him; and so it is said, the ox roasts or boils himself.'

The second part of the *Help to Discourse* contains a collection of riddles, epigrams, epitaphs, and jests, which no doubt formed the chief attraction of the book in the eyes of Cousin Slender. We cannot, however, praise the selection. What is good is not original, and what is original is scarcely above the humour of a village ale-house. Mr Shallow is told that 'a merry, affable, and pleasant countenance, with conceited and witty jests, seasoned with light and well-relished discourse, is fit table-talk and carriage to be used at such times.' In accordance with this view, he is presented with 'certain seasonings or jests to laugh out the end of a short discourse.' The following is a specimen: 'Jest 11. A witch condemned to be burned, and at the stake espied her son, to whom she called very earnestly for drink, which he denying to give, she the more earnestly craved, telling him she was exceeding dry. "Oh," quoth he, "no matter, mother; you will burn the better." The horrible brutality of this 'seasoning' is too unnatural to be even grotesque; but we must remember that in the trials for witchcraft in our own country and in New England, may be found almost as shocking examples of indifference to natural affection under the influence of a panic of superstition. Another 'jest' has a readiness of repartee that a London street-boy might well envy: 'One asking a merry blind man in what place he lost his eyes, who answered, from either side his nose.'

The third part of the *Help to Discourse* is, 'The Countreyman's Counsellour, or Necessary Addition to his yearly Oracle or Prognostication.' It is written by E. P. Philomathematicus. That this was a common name among astrologers, we learn from Elkanah Settle, the dramatist immortalised by a line in the *Dunciad*, who, in a pamphlet on Dryden's *Empress of Morocco*, speaks of 'poor Robin, or any other of the Philomathematics.'

In the teaching of E. P., there is a strange farrago of learning and superstition, that must have deeply impressed Mr Shallow. Under the guidance of this sage, Mr Shallow would learn the nature of the seven planets or wandering stars, in which are included the sun and the moon; of the spheres, which are somewhat prosaically likened to the 'skin or scale of an onion'; of the elements, and of the regions of the air. Descending, then, rather abruptly to more practical details, Mr Shallow's nerves would be shattered for ever by a long list of critical days in a man's life. Of these there are two in every month, when it is flying in the face of philosophy to expect peace of mind; and, to make matters worse, there are three especially dangerous Mondays 'to begin any business, to fall sick, or undertake any journey'—namely, 'first Monday in April, on which day Cain was born and his brother Abel slain; second Monday in August, which day Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed; the thirty-first of December, which day Judas was born that betrayed Christ.' No reference is made to any authority for these dates; but perhaps we are ignorant, and none was needed. An account of the 'seven ages of man's life, with predominancy of the seven planets or wandering stars in every one of them,' is a curious commentary on the well-known speech of the melancholy Jacques. Perhaps many people are not aware that this often-quoted passage was founded on the astrological notions of the time. The planets were supposed to have certain human characteristics, and man's nature varied as they successively became predominant over his life.

We have not space to give further extracts from this book; but we must notice a celebrated passage from *Hamlet*, which is given in words slightly differing from the received text. As the sixth edition of the *Help to Discourse* is dated 1627, it is possible that the first edition was published before the well-known folio edition of Shakspeare published in 1623. Every one is acquainted with the speech of Marcellus, which is thus quoted:

Some say for ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then they say no spirit dares walk abroad,
So sacred and so hallowed is that tune.

Whether or not the *Help to Discourse* is a later edition of the volume that Slender 'lent to Alice Shortcake upon Allhallowmas, a fortnight afore Michaelmas,' or whether or not it is the true cause, now for the first time discovered, of Silence declaring that he had 'been merry once or twice ere now,' it is well worthy of being read by any student of those times. It was written in the best age of the English language. We may certainly call it quaint; but we are rather apt at the present day to call those expressions 'quaint' that are in fact nice adaptations of language, which the conventional mediocrity of modern writing forbids our attempting. If we have learned nothing else from the *Help to Discourse*, we have learned of the country squire, whose portrait Shakspeare drew in Mr Shallow, how tickled he was with a little feeble pedantry, how submissive he was to authority, and how, provided they were spiced with sounding words or a learned reference, no lies were too big, and no superstitions too gross to be eagerly swallowed by him. Dr Johnson is reported to

have said that a second marriage was the 'triumph of hope over experience.' After reading the *Help to Discourse*, we may slightly alter the doctor's words, and say that modern science is the triumph of experience over imagination.

BRED IN THE BONE.

CHAPTER XXXI.—THE SENTENCE.

RICHARD remained in the dock. The warder who had charge of him gave him the option of retiring, but he preferred to stay where he was till all was over. He had at last caught sight of his mother, straining her loving eyes towards him—with still some hope in them—from a distant corner of the gallery; and he kept his gaze fixed upon that spot. They had all the world against them now, these two; so clever, and yet so wholly unable to combat with inexorable fate. Harry's evidence, and especially the manner of it, had not needed Mr Smoothbore's fiery scorn to turn all hearts against the accused. To the great mass of spectators, it seemed as though Richard would have made the girl change places with himself, and become a vicarious sacrifice for his worthless self.

The majesty of the law having withdrawn itself, a hum of many voices filled the court-house; a munching of biscuits, a sipping of flasks. The silence of suspense no longer reigned. The struggle was virtually over, and the victim was only waiting his doom. It was hoped it would be a severe one: the spectators were pitiless, and had, to speak classically, turned their thumbs towards their breasts. As to the verdict, there was no doubt. Those who knew the character of the judge, opined that this young gentleman would 'get it hot,' notwithstanding that this was his first offence. Odds were taken that he would have fourteen years. 'At all events,' said one of the small officials, in answer to eager inquiries, 'more than he could do on his head.' With this enigmatical reply of the oracle, its astonished questioners were compelled to be content.

'Silence in the court, si-lence!' The judge had returned. It was thought by some that it was in the prisoner's favour that the judge had lunched. They were mistaken, or perhaps a fatal economy had provided African sherry. His charge was scarcely less dead against the prisoner than had been Mr Smoothbore's closing speech.

As for the motive (said his lordship), upon which such stress had been laid by the counsel for the defence, if the jury should express their belief in it, it might not be undeserving of consideration at a later stage of the case, but he did not see how it could affect the question of the prisoner's guilt. At the time when these notes were taken from the box the prisoner was a guest in the prosecutor's house; they were immediately traced to his possession; and he was apprehended in the act of converting them to his own use. It might be asked by whom, if not by him, they were extracted from the box? But that was not the question they were called upon to answer. If the prisoner had not had the means of access to the box where the money was kept, there would be nothing to connect him with the actual taking, though his possession of the property immediately after it had been stolen might, if he were unable to account for such possession, make him amenable under that count

in the indictment which charged him with receiving the notes, knowing them to have been stolen. But here it was his—the judge's—duty to tell them there was evidence which pointed directly to the more serious charge of 'stealing from the dwelling-house.' The jury would not reject any reasonable doubts which the evidence, taken altogether, might have left upon their minds; but if they believed that the prisoner stealthily, and against the will of the prosecutor, took away this money with the intention of appropriating it to his own use, that would be a felonious taking, and in such case it would be their duty to pronounce him guilty.

Such was the form in which the case was left for the jury.

'It's U P,' whispered Mr Weasel behind his hand to Mr Balais. The serjeant nodded indifferently; the case was over so far as he was concerned; and he was not going to employ significant action gratuitously. That would have been waste of power indeed at his age. The jury did not leave the box; they laid their heads together, like a hydra, and 'deliberated' for half a minute, that is to say, the foreman whispered: 'We can return but one verdict, I should say, gentlemen;' and the eleven answered: 'But one.'

'We find the prisoner guilty, your lordship.'

His lordship nodded approval. 'In my opinion, gentlemen, you could not have done otherwise. Hem!' Then that common phrase, 'You could have heard a pin drop,' might have been used with respect to that vast assemblage. That 'hem!' was a very fatal sign with Mr Justice Bantam, as the bar well knew.

'I'll take you six to five in sovs, he gives him seven years,' whispered one learned gentleman to another without moving his lips.

'It seems to me you are rather fond of a good thing,' returned the other scornfully, but with a like precaution.

'Hem!' said the judge again. 'Is there any one in court able to give any information concerning the antecedents of the prisoner?'

'We have no witnesses to character, my lud,' said Mr Balais gravely: 'we had hoped it would not have been necessary.'

'There is a witness in court, please your ludship, a detective of the A division of metropolitan police, I believe,' observed Mr Smoothbore, 'who knows something of the prisoner.'

'Let him stand up,' said the judge.

Here was an extra excitement—an additional attraction, which had not been advertised in the bills—and the public evinced their satisfaction accordingly by craning and crowding. Richard turned his heated eyes in the direction of this new enemy. He had no hope of seeing a friend. The individual in question was unknown to him. He was a tall quiet-looking man, whose face might have been carved out of boxwood, it was so hard and serious, but for its keen eyes, which seemed to meet his own with a look of recognition.

'I know the prisoner at the bar; that is to say I have seen him on a previous occasion, when he passed under the name of Chandos, and on other occasions, as I believe, under other names. From information received, I attended a competitive examination, under the authority of government.'

'Do you mean that you were employed by

the government, or that the examination was a government one?' interrupted the judge.

'You'll hear something now,' whispered Mr Weasel to Mr Balais, 'by Jove!'

'Both, my lord,' explained the witness. 'It had come to the knowledge of the government that there had been several cases of personation in the competitive examinations recently instituted both for the military and civil services. Not only were young gentlemen, who had apparently passed with credit, found grossly ignorant of the subjects which they had previously been examined upon, but their physical appearance was sometimes such as would have seemed to have disqualified them: it appeared incredible that they should have passed the preliminary medical examination. One was hump-backed; another almost blind. It was understood that some systematised scheme of imposture—of misrepresentation—was at work to produce these results, and I was instructed to inquire into it. I did so. I came to the conclusion that only one person was concerned in the matter, the prisoner at the bar. I had had my suspicions of him for some time. I had seen him on three separate occasions as a candidate at public examinations. His nomination was correct and genuine, but (as I have since discovered) it had been issued to another person. He succeeded in every instance in obtaining the appointments in question for his employers, who received them in due course, though they have, I believe, since been cancelled. In the case of Chandos, a letter was written, by the supposed successful candidate, to the authorities of the government branch—the India Board—under which he was to serve, so grossly misspelled, that the fraud was at once suspected. In this instance the guilt was brought home to the prisoner by the confession of the young man Chandos himself, who paid over to him a considerable sum of money for the service in question. But I am now in a position to prove that on several other occasions the prisoner has committed the same offence; and, in short, if he may be said to have a calling, it is that of personating at competitive examinations young gentlemen of small ability, who are thus enabled to secure situations and appointments which they could otherwise never obtain.'

Mr Justice Bantam had his prejudices, but he had a fair and honest mind.

'This is a most unlooked-for communication, Brother Balais,' said he doubtfully; 'may I ask if you have any reason to think that the officer is mistaken as to the facts he has stated?'

'I am sorry to say, my lud,' returned Mr Balais, after a hurried conversation with the little attorney, 'that my client is not in a position to deny them. He prefers to throw himself upon the mercy of the court, on the ground—a very tenable one, I think—of his youth, and,' he was going to add 'inexperience,' but under the circumstances he thought it better not—' of his extreme youth, my lud: my unhappy client is barely eighteen years of age.

'Very good,' said Mr Justice Bantam, looking as if it could not be worse. 'Hem! Prisoner at the bar: after a careful and fair trial, in which you have had the benefit of the best legal aid, you have been found *guilty* of the charge of which you are accused. In that verdict I cordially concur. The offence was a very serious one; but the endeavour which you have made to screen yourself, at

the expense of that innocent and ingenuous young girl, is, in my opinion, still more heinous and contemptible than the crime itself. Having made yourself master of her affections, you used your power to the utmost to effect her moral and social hurt. You would have had her perjure herself, and proclaim herself guilty of a crime she did not commit, in order that you might yourself escape justice. Nobody who heard her evidence—who saw her in yonder box—can doubt it. Still, as your counsel has just remarked, you are but a youth in years, and I looked about me, in hopes to find some extenuating circumstances in your past career—some record of good—which might have justified me in inflicting on you a less severe sentence than your offence had earned. I had no other purpose in asking whether anything was known of your previous career. The reply to that question has astonished and shocked me, as it has shocked and astonished every right-thinking person in this court who heard it. We knew to what base purpose you had used the comeliness, and youth, and good address with which nature had endowed you; and now we have learned how evilly you have misused your talents—with what perverted ingenuity you have striven, at so early an age, to set at nought those precautions by which your country has lately endeavoured to secure for itself efficient public servants.'

'That's neat,' whispered a learned friend to Mr Balais, reverently shutting his eyes, as though in rapt admiration.

'It affects me to tears,' returned that gentleman.

'Nevertheless,' continued the judge, 'and notwithstanding that we have thus acquired an unexpected insight into your character, and the occupation you have followed, I shall not allow it to influence me in passing sentence upon you for the crime of which you stand convicted. It is with that offence only that I have now to deal. In the whole course of my legal experience, I have never seen a case which seems to me to call for more exemplary punishment than yours. The promise of your future is dark indeed—bad for yourself, and bad for that society, which, though so fitted to adorn and benefit it, you have chosen to outrage. I will not, however, reproach you further; I will rather express a hope that when you return to the world after your long probation—and it will be as long as I am able to make it—you may be a wiser and better, as well as a much older man. The sentence of the court is, that you be kept in penal servitude for the space of twenty years.'

CHAPTER XXXII.—BROODING.

Not a syllable of the judge's exhortation was lost upon the prisoner at the bar. He listened to it as attentively as one who is waiting for the thunder listens to the muffled menace that precedes it, and the fall of each big drop of rain. When the words of doom smote upon his ear, a solemn hush succeeded them; and then one piteous agonised shriek, and a dull fall in the gallery above.

'This way,' said a warder sharply; and Richard was seized by the arm, and hurried through the trap-door, and down the stairs, by the way he had come. It seemed to him like descending into hell itself.

Twenty years' penal servitude! It was almost an eternity of torment! worse than death! and

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yet not so. He already beheld himself at the end of his term of punishment setting about the great work which alone was left him to do on earth—the accomplishment of his revenge. He had recognised his mother's voice in that agonised wail, and knew that her iron will had given way; that the weight of this unexpected calamity had deprived even her elastic and vigorous mind of consciousness—had crushed out of her, perhaps, even life itself. Better so, thought he, in his bitterness, if it had; there would then be not a single human creature left to soften, by her attachment, his heart towards his fellows—none to counsel moderation, mercy, prudence.

If the view taken by the judge had even been a correct one, as to 'motive,' Richard had been hardly dealt with, most severely sentenced; but in his own eyes he was an almost innocent man—the victim of an infamous conspiracy, in which she who was his nearest and dearest had treacherously joined. After flattering him with false hopes, she had deserted him at the eleventh hour, and in a manner even more atrocious than the desertion itself. He knew, of course, that it was mainly owing to her evidence, to which he had looked for his preservation, that his ruin had been so complete and overwhelming; but what he hated her worst for was for that smile she had bestowed upon him as she entered the witness-box, and which had bade him hope, where no hope was. He could not be mistaken as to that. She had known that she was about to doom him by her silence to years of misery, and yet she had had the devilish cruelty to smile upon him, as she had often smiled, when they had sat, cheek to cheek, together! Since they had done so, he could never lift his hand against her (he felt that even now)—never strike her, slay her, nor even poison her; but he would have revenge upon her for all that. He would smite her, as she had smitten him, no matter how long the blow might be in falling: if her affections should be entwined in any human creatures, against them should his rage be directed; he would make her desolate, as she had rendered him; he would turn their love for her to hate, if it were possible, and if not, he would destroy them. As for her father—as for that stone devil Trevet-hick—it choked him to think that nature herself might preserve him from his wrath—that the old man might die before his hour of expiation could arrive. But Solomon Coe would live to feel his vengeance. His hatred was at white heat now; what would it be after twenty years of unmerited torture? To think that this terrible punishment had befallen him through such contemptible agencies—through such dull brains and vulgar hands—was maddening; and yet he must needs feed upon that thought for twenty years, and keep his senses too, that at the end they might work out his purpose to the uttermost. There was plenty of time to plan, and scheme, and plot before him; and henceforth that should be his occupation. Revenge should be his latest thought and his earliest; and all night long he would dream of nothing else. His wrath against judge and jury, and the rest of them—though, if he could have slain them all with a word, he would have uttered it—was slight compared with the vehemence of his fury against those three at Gethin. Rage possessed him wholly, and though without numbing him to the painful sense of his miserable doom, rendered him

almost unconscious of what was going on about him.

When he found himself in his cell again, he had no recollection of how he had got there; and the warder had to repeat his sharp command: 'Put on these clothes,' before he could get him to understand that he was to exchange his own garments for the prison suit that lay before him. It was a small matter, but it brought home to him the reality of his situation more than anything that had yet occurred. With the deprivation of his clothes, he seemed to be deprived of his individuality, and in adopting that shameful dress, to become an atom in a congeries of outcasts. From henceforth he was not even to bear a name, but must become a number—a unit of that great sum of scoundrels which the world was so willing to forget. That he was to suffer under a system which had authority and right for its basis, made his case no less intolerable to him; he felt like one suddenly seized and sold into slavery; that his master and tyrant was called the Law, was no mitigation of his calamity; nay, it was an aggravation, since he could not cut its throat.

'It is no use, young fellow,' said the warder coolly, as Richard looked at him like some hunted beast at bay. 'If you was to kill me and a dozen more, it would do you not a morsel of good; the law has got you tight, and it's better to be quiet.'

Richard uttered a low moan, more woeful than any cry of physical anguish. It touched his jailer, used as he was to the contemplation of human misery. 'Look here,' said he; 'you keep up a good heart, and get as many *V Gs* as you can. Then you'll get out on ticket-of-leave in fifteen years: it ain't as if you were a lifer.'

He meant it for consolation, but this unvarnished statement of the *very best* that could by possibility befall poor Richard, seemed only to deepen his despondency.

'Why, when you've done it,' pursued the warder, 'you'll be quite a young man still—younger than I am. There's Balfour, now; he's got some call to be down in the mouth, for he'll get it as hot as you, and he's an old un, yet he's cheery enough up yonder'—and he jerked his head in the direction of the court-house—'you may take your 'davey, he is. You get *V Gs*.'

'What are those?' said Richard wearily.

'Why, the best marks that can be got; and remember that every one of 'em goes to shorten your time. You must be handier with your room, to begin with. You might be reported by some officers for the way in which that hammock is folded, and then away go your marks at once; and you must learn to sweep your room out cleaner. We couldn't stand that in one of our regulars, you know; and he pointed to some specks of dust upon the shining floor. 'As for the oakum pickings which will be set you to-morrow, I'll shew you the great secret of that art. Your fingers will suffer a bit at first, no doubt, but you'll be a clever one at it before long. Only buckle to, and keep a civil tongue in your head, young fellow, and you'll do.'

'Thank you,' said Richard mechanically.

'If you'll take my advice, you'll set about something at once; sweepin', or polishin', or readin' your Bible. Don't brood. But you will do as you like for this afternoon, since you won't begin regular business till to-morrow.'

The warder looked keenly round the cell, probably to make sure that it afforded no facilities for suicide; but the gas was not yet turned on, and if it had been, his prisoner was unaware that by blowing it out, and placing the jet in his mouth, more than one in a similar strait to his own has found escape from his prison woes for ever.

'I'll bring you some supper presently,' he added; and with a familiar nod, good-naturedly intended for encouragement, he slammed the iron door behind him.

That he should have become an object of pity and patronage to a man like this, would in itself have wounded Richard to the quick, had he not been devoured by far more biting cares, and even now it galled him. His twenty years might possibly, then, by extremity of good luck, be curtailed by five. By diligent execution of menial drudgery; by performing to some overlooker's satisfaction his daily toil; by careful obedience and subservience to these Jacks in office, themselves but servants, and yet whose malice or ill-humour might cause them to report him for the most trifling faults, or for none at all, and thereby destroy even *this* hope—he might be a free man in fifteen years! He would, even then, he was told, be still a young man. But that he would never be young again, Richard was well aware. Within these last three weeks—nay, within that last hour, he had already lived a life, and one that had aged him beyond the power of years. High spirits, pleasure, hopefulness, love, and all the attributes of youth, were dead within him for evermore. For the future, he was only to be strong and vigorous in a will that could not have its way for fifteen years at earliest.

Through the grating of his narrow window a few rays of the setting sun were streaming in, and fell upon the bare brown wall behind him. What a flood of glory they were pouring on the woods of Crompton, now in their autumn splendour—on the cliffs at Gethin—on the copse that hid the Wishing Well—on the tower where he had first clasped Harry in his arms! He saw them all, and the sunset hues upon them became suddenly blood-red. He was once more at Gethin, and in imagination taking his revenge upon old Trevethick, and for the moment he was almost happy. 'Pity on his gray hairs?' No, not he—though the gallows loomed before him, though hell yawned for him, he would slake his thirst in the life-blood of that perjured villain; and as for her, he would drag her by the hair to look upon her father's corpse. Where was she? Ah, with Solomon upon the castled rock; and see!—he had pushed him from the edge, and there he hung exactly as he himself had hung when Harry had preserved him! How long would a man hold on like that, even a strong man like Coe, on such a narrow ledge, with the gulls screaming about him? Not twenty years—no, nor fifteen!

The clatter of the trap in the door of his cell, as it fell in and formed a table, awoke him from this gloating dream. 'Supper,' said the warder, looking in at him through this orifice. 'What! you're still brooding, are you?—that's bad;' then marched on to the next cell.

Some gruel and bread stood upon this little improvised sideboard. If they had been the greatest luxuries imaginable, he could not have swallowed a morsel. The sunlight had faded away: his dream of retribution was over; he seemed to

be touching the utmost verge of human wretchedness. Was it possible to kill himself? His neckerchief had been taken away; but he had his braces. The gas-pipe was the only thing to which he could attach them, and it would never bear his weight. He had read somewhere of some poor wretch who had suffocated himself by turning his tongue inwards. Had he determination enough for such a device as that?—Plenty. His will was iron; he felt that; but it was set on something else than suicide—that afterwards, or death or life of any kind, he cared not what; but in the first place, and above all things, Vengeance! In the meantime, there were twenty years in which to think upon it! Twenty years!

The bar dined with the judges that night at Cross Key, and talked, among other things, 'shop.' 'A curious case that of that young fellow Yorke,' said one. 'I wonder whether he has been playing his game long with these competitive examinations? That Chandos must be a queer one too—son of Lord Fitzbacon's, is he not?'

'I daresay,' answered another carelessly. 'It is only vicariously that the juvenile aristocracy ever get an appointment in these days, having no wits of their own. This conviction will be a great blow to them.'

'Very good, Sharpshins; but you'd better not let old Bantam hear you, for he dearly loves the Swells. By-the-bye, what a pretty girl that witness for the defence was, who turned out to be for the prosecution, eh?'

'Yes, she upset her lover's coach for him nicely. Is it true, I wonder, that the little traitress is going to marry that dull heavy fellow whom Smoothbore had such work to pump? Gad! if I had been she, I'd have stuck to the other.'

'Yes; but kissing goes by favour. She marries him next week, I hear.—Is there anything of interest at Bodmin?'

'Nothing of interest to *me*, at all events. Smoothbore and Balais get all there is between them, confound them! I say, just pass that claret.'

Not another word about Richard. The judge himself had forgotten him except as a case in his notes. The jury forgot him in a week. A murder of a shipwrecked sailor happened soon afterwards on that coast, and became the talk of the countryside in his place. The world went on its way, and never missed him; the rank closed up where he had used to march, and left no gap.

Richard Yorke was out of the world.

JOB'S COMFORTERS.

THE torrent came swirling the drowning man,
Rider and horse; and the fish spoke thus,
Cried the grayling and the salmon-trout:
'Why don't you swim like us!'

Down lightning-struck the aeronaut fell,
Down through a mile of sky,
Cried the eaglets and the eagle king:
'Creature, why can't you fly?'

The mole came where the dead men slept,
The mole and his brother-scout,
And said: 'You soldiers that were shot,
Why don't you burrow out!'

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